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Director, Central Intelligence

21 May 1948

Assistant Director for Operations

Egyptian Seizure of FBIS Cairo Radio Equipment

1. Reference cable 651 Tuck to Marshall, 20 May 1948, subject as above, following are pertinent considerations:

A. Subject equipment comprises radio receivers, recorders, antennae and associated equipment. Seizure would eliminate all monitoring in Cairo. FBIS could provide through NSC facilities in Caversham only superficial coverage of Near and Middle East transmitters. Coverage of Albanian and Soviet regional transmitters would be practically eliminated, and monitoring of Greek, Turkish, Yugoslav, Rumanian and Bulgarian broadcasts would be significantly reduced.

B. If circumvented in the proposed seizure of equipment, the Egyptian Government can block monitoring coverage with almost equal effectiveness, if it desires, through censorship of communications to Washington. Extended delays largely destroy the value of this type of material. The arrest of Jewish employees of the Bu-ear, hired locally, might also seriously hamper the operation. One such employee, to date, has disappeared.

C. Construction of the projected monitoring station at Kyrenia, Cyprus, cannot be completed before October, 1948, and activation was not anticipated before early 1949. However, monitoring equipment enroute to Cyprus, scheduled to arrive in early June, will be sufficient to set up a makeshift operation providing coverage of Near East, Turkish, Greek and Albanian transmitters, provided that personnel, particularly linguists, can be obtained from Cairo and Caversham. NSC has agreed to emergency transfer of linguists on a share-cost basis. Such an operation can probably be initiated before 1 July 1948.

2. It is recommended that:

A. If possible, equipment in Cairo be retained, and the operation safeguarded against molestation through censorship, arrest of employees or other interference, until 1 January 1949.

B. If that is impossible, seizure of equipment be delayed until 1 July 1948, and free exit from Egypt be guaranteed for employees.

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21 May 1948

1. Commitment to NEC be authorized to share equally the costs of transporting and maintaining on Cyprus for six months as many as 20 NEC employees.

PKH:brg

  
Brigadier General, USA

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